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To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

November 6th, 1813.

I NEVER intended that the matter alluded to in the paper signed "Detector," in your Magazine for August last, should have been brought before the public, after it had been settled by arbitration, as I had reason to think the delinquents were sorry for their conduct, for which they paid pretty smartly. But some late proceedings of these persons have convinced me they are unworthy of the clemency that was shown to them, and that their late conduct plainly points them out as very improper men. I, therefore, send the following account, which I drew up at the time, and sent to the Belfast News-Letter for insertion, but the Editor altered it very materially, at which I was not pleased. Before they got to the inn, they fired at dogs in the streets, and were near shooting some men who were making up mortar in the street.

"A MOST WANTON OUTRAGE.

"On Tuesday evening, the 23d instant,* two wanton bucks having ordered a carriage at the inn in the town of Banbridge, to follow them on their way to Belfast, walked on through the town with pistols in their hands; when ascending the hill a short way from the town, one of them wantonly fired a pistol into the cabin-door of a poor man, and broke a parcel of delph on a shelf, which fell into a cradle in which an infant lay. They passed on laughing heartily at the greatness of the exploit: the shouts of the women and children alarmed the poor man who

was at work in an adjacent field; on being informed of the cause of the alarm, he and his brother pursued and came up with these bucks, with an intention to seize and chastise them, but one of them presented his pistol at the poor man, with oaths and threats, and he was advised by some men who were present, not to attempt touching them, as they were considered as gentlemen of the first rank and distinction, inhabitants of Belfast." "Detector" has told the sequel of the story.

HONESTY.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

TRUTH is like the resplendent and resplendent rays of the meridian sun, darted from that bright orb of heaven, to dissipate and disperse those gloomy mists of darkness which envelop this earth; and to enlighten and beautify all-created nature. Truth is an attribute, an essential attribute of the deity; from him it emanates; in him it centres.

Truth in every age has had its votaries, and admirers. These have always been highly, and honourably distinguished for their zeal, and for their respectability. A philosopher is the venerable, and illustrious title which mankind has universally conferred upon them; and by which they have been peculiarly distinguished. Zeal in the discovery, and zeal in the dissemination of truth, has always distinguished the genuine philosopher. Possessed of souls, whose views were wide and extended; whose conceptions were grand and lofty; whose principles were pure and refined, those worthy men who have so ably acted their parts, and retired with applause from this world's stage, whose actions we admire, and whose names we venerate, they were possessed

* The exact date is forgotten; probably 1805 or 1806.

of a calm and undaunted resolution ; a noble intrepidity, which enabled them to attack and combat error, and hazard their lives and reputations, in the attempt to rescue their fellow-creatures from its baneful influence, and enlighten their minds with divine truth. In this grand attempt, they have not always been rewarded with success. Disappointment has frequently blasted their fond expectations ; and their generous endeavours to benefit mankind, have been rewarded, alas ! with death, imprisonment, or exile. The punishments due to, and intended for the most heinous and aggravated guilt, have been inflicted on men whose only crime was, an ardent zeal to enlighten, and promote the happiness of their fellow-creatures.

Behold the venerable Socrates, condemned to death, for unfolding the errors and vices of his countrymen, and advocating the cause of truth.

Behold the illustrious senator, Cato, a solitary exile in a foreign land, in consequence of his inflexible attachment to the cause of liberty.

Behold, in our own days, the virtuous Tennent, an inmate of a gloomy prison, suffering in common with the vilest malefactors, for his enlightened zeal in endeavouring to suppress the envenomed spirit of party ; and to restore harmony and peace to his distracted country.

Oh ! human nature how monstrous is your depravity ! Oh ! pride and prejudice how baneful and malignant are your influence ! The rational soul of man is darkened and depraved ; truth is expelled or extinguished, and error eagerly received, and fondly cherished.

Since the dissolution and extinction of the Greek and Roman empires, no country has been more fruitful in political martyrs, than

Great-Britain. There, these many centuries, has existed a continual conflict between truth and error : between established custom and innovation : between pride and prejudice, armed with power, on the one hand, and bold and zealous reform, armed with truth on the other. In no country has this conflict been productive of more extraordinary or varied events. In no country has it depicted human nature more clearly. In no country has the events which it produced called forth such an assemblage of brilliant shining characters, or occasioned such a display of noble and exalted virtues. Warriors, statesmen, clergymen, and senators, have zeulously espoused the cause of truth, and have despised the frowns and threats of despotism ; they have resolutely resisted the approaches of tyranny : they have hazarded their lives and fortunes in the cause of civil and religious liberty, and when all their virtuous efforts proved fruitless and unavailing, they have chosen the crown of martyrdom, and bowed their heads on the fatal scaffold ; or have voluntarily banished themselves from their native country, and taken up their residence in the woods and morasses of the American Continent. The conflict between truth and error ; between zealous reform and ignorant prejudice ; between the spirit of liberty and the spirit of slavery, still continues, and must still continue, until human nature arrives at absolute perfection.

In our country, Ireland, these principles all exist, and act in continual opposition to each other. In every individual ; in every member of society ; one of those contrary principles must predominate ; and the predominating sentiments of Irishmen must decide their national character. It is, I trust, for the honour of our country, unquestiona-

ble, that the preponderating opinion is on the side of truth. That a zeal for civil and religious liberty is, and ever will be, the distinguishing characteristic feature of Irishmen as well as Britons. It is to be hoped that this spirit will never be annihilated by the arm of tyranny; but, that truth, conscious of the righteousness of her cause, will never despair of victory; will never sink under oppression; will never relinquish her contest with error, until her zeal, constancy, and resolution, are ultimately crowned with complete success.

MARCELLUS.

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

GENTLEMEN,
I MUST confess I was not a little surprised, on reading over an account of a late trial and conviction: the parts which most particularly arrested my attention, were, first, "Whether the assault was committed;" this the Jury thought fit to assent to, by their verdict of guilty. When I had read so far, my mind was prepared for the reception of an impartial sentence, founded on the verdict of the Jury; so far do I agree with the sentence, "you have been indicted for an assault on the person, &c."—"that Jury has pronounced you guilty." Why then, I ask, was not the sentence of the law passed suitable to such a "violent assault," without taking into consideration, (as expressed in the sentence,) that "it was only in the power of the Jury to decide on the simple fact of your guilt or innocence; it was not in their power to connect with their verdict the peculiar circumstances attending the case; that is a duty referred to the Bench in passing sentence, and they are to be guided by those circumstances, whe-

ther of mitigation or aggravation, in the extent of the punishment they are to inflict."

"The Bench have considered it necessary to attend particularly to the disrespect you had shewn on that occasion to the Judges and Juries of the land, and the Constitution of the country."

The traverser was indicted for an assault. Was he punished for that assault alone? No, he was not; the offence was divided by the Bench, and from the one offence they made two crimes to flow, one for the decision of the Jury, the other for the Bench; the Jury punish him for the assault, the Bench for the "disrespect, &c." I always understood the great bulwark of liberty to be a trial by Jury, but in this instance the Jury only performed part of the business, they adjudged the traverser guilty of the assault, but the Bench created a new power to themselves, unknown to the Constitution, that of Judge and Jury in one body, (which by the principles of the Constitution were wisely intended to act as a counterpoise one on the other,) and consequently the punishment inflicted on the traverser was beyond that due for the "violent assault," "as the Bench have considered it necessary to attend particularly to the disrespect, &c.," and measured their sentence accordingly, not by the verdict of the Jury for the assault, but for the "disrespect, &c."

Had the traverser committed a breach of the law, in having spoken against the Judges, &c., why not let him have a fair trial by Jury? If the Jury should find him guilty, let him bow in submission to their decision; but in this case, he was condemned for this supposed offence, without referring it to his Peers; the Bench referred to the Jury the question of his guilt or innocence for the supposed assault, they con-